

EARLY LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT IN NEW YORK STATE (1800-1900)

By GEORGE WATSON COLE, L.H.D., Litt.D.

Librarian Emeritus of the
Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery



THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

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EARLY LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT IN NEW YORK STATE (1800-1900)

BY GEORGE WATSON COLE, L.H.D. (Litt.D.)

Librarian Emeritus of the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery

IN this age of active and widespread library interest, it requires some little effort to carry our minds back and correctly visualize the conditions that existed one hundred years or more ago. To aid in so doing, it will be well to remember that less than two decades separated the year 1800 from the close of the Revolutionary War and but little more than a decade from the adoption of the Federal Constitution.

In 1771, just before the Revolutionary War broke out, the population of New York City was only about 22,000. Its increase during the contest was slow. After the close of the war the city began to grow rapidly, so that in 1790 it numbered over 33,000. In 1800, or at the period to which attention is here particularly called, the population, according to the census of that year, had increased to a little over 60,000. This population, it was said, was confined within a somewhat limited area, the street farthest up-town being below Canal Street, on both the east and west sides of Broadway.

Of the other towns in the State, Albany, alone, was of any considerable size. Although the capitol of the State, and occupying a commanding position, we are told that it "was nevertheless, in point of size, commercial importance, and architectural dignity, but a third- or fourth-rate town. It was not, in some respects, what it might have been . . . Its population could . . . not have exceeded some seven or eight thousand."

The western part of the state was a wilderness, into which already one of the main streams of western emigration had begun to pour its restless settlers. The front of emigration at this time extended far beyond Elmira and Bath.

"In 1790 the State of New York, westward, from a meridian through Seneca Lake to the Canadian boundary was one huge county. Before 1812 that same region had been cut into seven." As late as 1810 there was a large

NOTE — Other recent articles on this subject, which have appeared in the BULLETIN, are "The Library Celebrates a Centennial" [*i.e.*, the Harlem Library] in the BULLETIN, September, 1925; and "Petitioners for Founding the Albany Library in 1792," in the BULLETIN, September, 1926.

extent of country in the northern part of the state where the population averaged less than two persons to the square mile, and at no place, except a strip lying on both banks of the Hudson and Mohawk rivers, did the population exceed eighteen to the square mile. The entire population of the state in 1800 numbered less than 600,000 (589,051), and such were the hardships endured by the settlers of the frontier, that many of them were barely able to keep themselves supplied with the means of subsistence. "Nothing (we are told) was as scarce as food; many a wayfarer was turned from the settlers' doors with the solemn assurance that they had not enough for themselves."

From a picture of the times, thus briefly sketched, we need not be surprised to learn that, except in a very few of the larger towns, no libraries had as yet been founded. In this primitive, restless, and unsettled condition of society, the public mind was not yet ripe for, nor, indeed, had it the leisure to devote to the higher aims of life and culture.

Previous to 1800, little attention had been paid to the establishment of libraries, and little care had been taken to keep or preserve their records. It is therefore with great difficulty that we are able to obtain reliable information concerning their early history. Not until nearly half a century later (1846) was the first creditable account of American libraries written by Herman Ludewig and printed in the *Serapeum*, a periodical published at Leipzig, Germany. When, in 1849, a Select Committee of Parliament desired to obtain information concerning the libraries in this country, our Secretary of State was obliged to reply "that, with every disposition to do so, the Department finds that it has no means of gratifying the wishes of Her Majesty's government in this respect!" From the United States Bureau of Education's Special Report, on "Public Libraries in the United States (1876)", we learn (pt. 1, p. xvi) that "So far as is known, there were in 1776 twenty-nine public libraries [and here it should be noted that the word public is used in contradistinction to private] in the thirteen American colonies [or scarcely more than two to each colony], and they numbered altogether 45,623 volumes. In the year 1800 the number of libraries had increased to 49, and the number of volumes to about 80,000."

NEW YORK SOCIETY LIBRARY. 1700

As nearly as can be ascertained, there were in the State of New York in 1800 only fourteen libraries, of which nine have survived to the present day. Four of them only are of any considerable size. A brief sketch of these pioneers in the library field may prove interesting. First, in the order of

their foundation comes the New York Society Library, founded in 1754. In that year an association of 140 gentlemen was formed under the name of the "New York, or City Library." More than half a century before, in 1700, one had been founded, known as "The Public Library" of New York. It prospered for some time and received by bequest in 1729 the books of the Rev. Dr. Millington, of Newington, England. This library was placed in the City Hall and was in charge of the Corporation of the City. At this time it numbered 1,642 volumes. It was the intention that it should be a lending library, from which the clergymen and gentlemen of the governments of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut might borrow books. This was probably the earliest lending library in America; the Library Company of Philadelphia, founded by Franklin and characterized by him as the "Mother of all the North American subscription libraries," not having been organized until 1731, more than thirty years later. The City Library at the time the new Library association was organized was suffering from neglect and mismanagement. The trustees of the new association asked that the old library be turned over to the new organization. This was done, and the whole collection placed under their care in the City Hall. It was known as "The City Library," until 1772, when it received a charter from King George the Third in which it was named "The New York Society Library." The Revolutionary War soon followed, the books were scattered, and for fourteen years its work was suspended. Early in 1788 (February 18th) its charter was renewed, and active operations resumed. Five years later a building was begun on Nassau Street, opposite the old Dutch Church next to the corner of Liberty Street. At this time the library is said to have contained 5,000 volumes. In 1800 it had grown to 6,000 volumes, or to nearly three times the size of the Columbia College Library of that time.

Its next home was at the corner of Leonard Street and Broadway where it was housed from 1840 – 1853. Since 1856 it has been in its present building at 109 University Place. Jewett, in his *Notices of Public Libraries* (1851), says that "there was at that time, in the Society Library a copy of Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion*, marked Public Library of New York, 1811 [an evident misprint for 1711]". Wishing to see this earliest relic of the first library established in this state, the present writer visited the Society Library, and learned to his deep regret, that it was no longer on its shelves. The librarian emeritus, at that time, Mr. Wentworth S. Butler, remembered to have seen it with the inscription "Ye Publick Library of New York, 1711," stamped on its side. However, a volume was shown which once belonged to the old library, and which from its local character may be considered even

more interesting than the former. This was a copy of Bradford's *New York Gazette*, for 1726, the first newspaper printed in New York, and in it was this inscription: "A gift to the New York City Library, December 17, 1739." In 1800 the Society Library possessed 6,500 volumes, which had increased to 35,000 in 1850 (118,105 in 1926).*

COLUMBIA COLLEGE LIBRARY. 1757

The second library founded in the state was that of Columbia College. Its early history is nearly coeval with that of the college, which was first known as King's College and was founded in 1754. The Library early received the gift of two collections: that of Joseph Murray, of London, and that of the Rev. Dunscombe Bristowe, the latter containing about 1500 volumes. From bequests, gifts, and purchases, it had acquired a valuable collection of books, when on the 6th of April, 1776, the treasurer of the college was given six days' notice to vacate, in order that the premises might be converted into a military hospital. The books were stored in the City Hall and other places, but were subsequently scattered and disappeared entirely from sight, until about thirty years later, when some six or seven hundred volumes, together with as many more belonging to the Society Library, were discovered in a room in St. Paul's Chapel. No one, not even the sexton, was able to tell how or when they came there. In 1792 the legislature made a grant to the College for its library, and an addition, a large one for those days, was the result. In 1800 it had upon its shelves 2,249 volumes. In 1850 it contained 12,740 volumes (982,648, in 1926).

In addition to the Society Library and that of Columbia College there were several others, founded between 1774 and 1797. Most of these were connected with academies and seminaries. They were, with the dates of their foundation: Kingston Free Academy Library, 1774; Kingston School Library, No. 5, 1774; Erasmus Hall Academy Library, Flatbush, 1787; Saratoga County Law Library, Ballston, 1791; Montgomery Union School Library, 1791; Albany Institute Library, 1793; Canandaigua Academy Library, 1795; Lansingburg Academy Library, 1796; Oakwood Seminary Library, Union Springs, 1796; Hartwick Seminary Library, 1797.

It should be observed that all the libraries founded before 1800 belonged to a class known as proprietary libraries or those connected with educational institutions. We are told that these early libraries "seem to have been gen-

*("The first paper published in the city was printed by William Bradford. It made its appearance October 16, 1725, and was entitled, *The New York Gazette*." — Isaiah Thomas, *History of Printing in America*; 2d ed., [Albany, 1874], vol. 1, p. 98.)

erally used by the local reading public, their stricter and limited adaptation to the use of the faculty and students having arisen with the growth of public lending libraries."

LIBRARIES FOUNDED FROM 1800 – 1824

As we direct our attention to the library progress made during the first quarter of the nineteenth century we shall see that public interest in libraries seems to receive a fresh impetus about once in every twenty-five years.

From the most reliable statistics available we learn that, from 1800 to 1824, 25 new libraries were founded in the state. Though not the earliest state library (several others of its kind having already been established) the New York State Library has become one of the largest and most liberally administered.

The most important libraries founded during this period, with dates of foundation, are: United States Military Academy, 1802; New York Historical Society, 1804; New York State Library, 1818; Apprentices' Library, New York City, 1820; New York Mercantile Association, 1820.

We have scarcely any detailed information concerning the status of New York libraries at the end of the first quarter of the 19th century; but we get a glimpse of them in an anniversary address delivered before the New York Lyceum of Natural History, by Dr. James E. DeKay, in February, 1826. He says: "The want of proper books to facilitate inquiries of a scientific nature has been long felt in this city; indeed it has frequently been asserted that New York, in proportion to its population, contains fewer works in its public libraries than any other city in Europe or America. With a view of ascertaining the truth of this assertion, at least as far as our own country is concerned, we have taken some pains to procure the following comparative statement . . . *New York*, with a population of 170,000, possesses ten public libraries, containing 44,000 volumes; *Baltimore*, with a population of 70,000, has four public libraries, containing 30,000 volumes; *Philadelphia*, with a population of 160,000 possesses nineteen public libraries, containing 70,000 volumes; *Boston*, with a population of 60,000, possesses thirteen public libraries, containing 55,000 volumes."

LIBRARIES FOUNDED FROM 1824 – 1849

During the second quarter of the nineteenth century a new era in library development was inaugurated in New York state by the establishment of School District Libraries. It was a movement, far-reaching in its influence

and one in which we see the germs of nearly every important phase that has since been emphasized in the library field, and much of which we, of the present day, are complaisantly accustomed to believe has been originated since 1876. So important was the School District Library Movement that its history and the results which followed, well merit a detailed description; especially, as the mid-century and centennial-year library awakenings were but the natural outcome of this earlier movement.

Prior to legislation in New York for the formation of School District Libraries, laws had been passed only in the interests of library associations, societies, and other quasi-public corporations. This had been done by granting them acts of incorporation. None of them was supported by public taxation. To New York is due the credit of first placing upon its statute book a law permitting corporate or municipal bodies, *i.e.*, school districts, to tax themselves for the purpose of forming and maintaining libraries for the free use of all their inhabitants. Library legislation, as shown by Mr. Fletcher in his little Manual, has naturally divided itself into several stages. In the earliest, as we have seen, the library was recognized only by acts incorporating library associations, societies, etc. Up to 1835 no law had been passed permitting taxation for library support.

In his message to the legislature, January, 1827, Governor De Witt Clinton made the first allusion we can find to the formation of tax-supported libraries, in the following terms: "Small and suitable collections of books and maps attached to our common schools . . . are worthy of our attention. When it is understood that objects of this description enter into the very formation of our characters, control our destinies through life, protect the freedom and advance the glory of our country . . . let it be our pride, as it is our duty, to spare no exertion and to shrink from no expense in the promotion of a cause consecrated by religion and enjoined by patriotism."

But for his untimely death, the following year, his recommendation might have been further pressed upon the legislature, and earlier action taken. Three years later the attention of the legislature was a second time called to the matter, by Azariah C. Flagg, then Secretary of State and ex-officio Superintendent of Common Schools. Here the matter rested until 1834, when John A. Dix, then Superintendent of Common Schools, again renewed the recommendation in still more emphatic terms: — "If the inhabitants of school districts were authorized to lay a tax upon their property for the purpose of purchasing libraries for the use of the districts, such power might, with proper restrictions, become a most efficient instrument in diffusing useful knowledge, and in elevating the intellectual character of the people . . . A

vast amount of useful information might in this manner be collected where it would be easily accessible, and its influence could hardly fail to be in the highest degree salutary, by furnishing the means of improvement to those who have finished their common school education, as well as to those who have not." We here see what is perhaps the first germ of the Adult Education idea, so strongly stressed at the present day.

Superintendent Dix recommended that the imposition of a tax for this purpose be made discretionary, and that the amount levied be limited to ten or fifteen dollars for the first year, and to five dollars annually thereafter. "So small a tax (he says in closing) could hardly be felt, in any case, by those on whom it would devolve to contribute it: and, as its imposition would be voluntary, it would be made only where its tendency would be to produce salutary effects."

The following year (1835) the law above recommended was passed allowing each district to levy a tax of twenty dollars for the first year for the purchase of a library and not more than ten dollars for each subsequent year. This law was taken advantage of by a few districts, but not so generally as was thought desirable.

In his Report for 1838, Superintendent Dix recommended that, instead of making the law compulsory, as seems to have been suggested by others, the sum of five dollars be paid from the income of the United States Deposit Fund to every district which should vote to purchase a library. In his report for the following year (1839) he seeks to impress more deeply the idea that these libraries were founded upon the broadest principles. The impression seems to have become prevalent that they were intended only for the pupils of the schools. To meet and combat this opinion he says: — "It would be natural to suppose from their name, that these libraries were intended solely for the use of the schools, but they were not established with so narrow a design. They were recommended to the Legislature by the Superintendent of Common Schools, in the year 1834, 'for the benefit of those who have finished their common school education, as well as for those who have not.' They were designed as an instrument for elevating the intellectual condition of the whole people, by introducing into each school district collections of books, which should be accessible to all."

During the first three years, after the passage of the School District Library Law, only about 300 districts took advantage of its provisions. In April, 1838, following the suggestion of Superintendent Dix, a law was passed authorizing the annual payment of \$55,000, from the income of the United States Deposit Fund to the school districts, to be expended by them

for the purchase of libraries, upon condition that the districts would raise as much more for the same purpose. This law was to remain in force for three years, after which the districts might apply the money to the purchase of libraries or to the payment of teachers' wages at their discretion. This law, involving the principle of State aid, for the founding and support of libraries, gave so great an impulse to the movement that Superintendent Dix was able to say in his Report for 1839 that "several thousand libraries have been procured during the year 1839 by means of the fund distributed for that purpose, with the addition in numerous instances of money raised by voluntary taxation. The amount expended as shown by this Report was \$94,937.52.

Superintendent Dix sounded the first note of apprehension and warning, in his Report for 1839, when he said: "During the next three years, many valuable volumes will be prepared for the formation of district libraries, and the obligation to purchase books will cease, at the very moment when perhaps it will be most desirable it should continue. The temptation to apply to the payment of teachers all moneys that can be obtained in order to reduce the rate of tuition is so strong, that many of the districts will probably appropriate the library money to that purpose, as soon as it ceases to be subject to the existing provision." How truly this prophecy was fulfilled, we shall see in the later history of these libraries. The money available for them at this time was about twenty cents a year for each child of school age, or of from five to sixteen years of age.

In 1843 another law was passed creating a special library fund for the purchase of school apparatus and the payment of teachers' wages under certain conditions. State aid had given such vitality and interest to the movement, that by 1843, or during a period of eight years, the number of volumes in these school libraries had risen to the enormous aggregate of nearly 875,000 volumes. Some idea of the extent of this growth may be realized, when we pause to consider that but a single one of the largest libraries in this country, at that time, contained more than 70,000 volumes. Other states had watched the experiment with great interest and hastened to enact similar laws. Massachusetts and Michigan were the first in 1837; Connecticut followed in 1839; Rhode Island and Iowa in 1840; Indiana, 1841; Maine, 1844; Ohio, 1847; Wisconsin, in its constitution, in 1848; Missouri, 1853; and California in 1866.

Recognizing one of the weak points of the system, Mr. Henry Barnard, at that time Superintendent of Common Schools in Connecticut, in his Report for 1841, made some recommendations which the later history of libraries

in this country has proved to have been supremely wise. His recommendation was: "That the entire sum appropriated to each town be expended under the direction of the town officer, and the books be placed in as many cases as there are districts, each case to pass in succession through all the districts in the town. Each district will thus, at any one time, have access to as many books as under the other plan (the school district library plan) and in the end, to all the books in the several libraries. This increases the variety by the number of districts, and keeps up the novelty by a constant supply of new authors. By local regulations, the cases can be returned to the town superintendent, at certain stated periods, for inspection, as well as for exchange, and thus the books will be more likely to [be] preserved, and any damage or loss assessed to the proper district." Attention will later be called to this recommendation.

We now see the School District Libraries of New York firmly established and entering upon a career of rapid growth which was to become the marvel of the times. As has been said, the law of 1835, establishing these libraries, foreshadowed nearly every important phase of library development in which we of to-day take much pride. Let us now briefly enumerate the principal features of the law and the opinions of those interested in the administration of these libraries, and see if this assertion is correct.

In the first place, the principle of taxation for the formation and maintenance of free lending libraries was well established as early as 1835. It has been asserted that the Massachusetts Act of 1848, authorizing Boston to levy a tax for the establishment of a free public library, was "really the germ out of which has grown much of the library legislation in this as well as in other countries." At the time that law was passed, New York had over 11,000 districts, in nearly all of which were free lending libraries containing an aggregate of 1,310,986 volumes, which were being maintained by voluntary taxation, and, more progressive still, aided by an annual appropriation from the state; and all this under a law passed for the purpose thirteen years before the Massachusetts law was enacted.

In the second place, we see the principle of state aid to public libraries firmly established, by the law of 1838, and an annual appropriation of \$55,000 made for the purpose, which amount has been continued from that day to the present, and which down to 1900 had never at any time fallen below \$50,000. And this principle we have lived to see extended to the support of the free circulating library, whether connected or not with the educational system of the state. The broad principle that lies at the foundation of all library legislation recognizes the fact that the free public library

is and should be essentially a part of the system of public education in the state. The states, forming the Union, yearly spend millions upon millions of dollars in the maintenance of their common school systems; although, as we are informed, the average school life of our children is but 4.65 years, or less than one-half of the recognized school age. If such vast sums are spent for laying only the simplest rudiments of an education, how much more fitting that the state itself should also appropriate large sums for the support of free public libraries to supplement the work scarcely even begun in the common schools?

In Mr. Barnard's suggestion (and he certainly was a man far in advance of his time), as well as in the law itself, we see what has come to be one of the most important of our latter-day library principles — the closest relationship between the public library and the schools.

Mr. Barnard, also, in language which for lucidity and brevity cannot be excelled, gives us the best possible description of the work of branch libraries and delivery stations and also of that later offspring of library development, the travelling library. There is, furthermore, everything to favor, and nothing to discredit, the belief that open shelves were also one of the principal features of the school district library.

We have moreover, in clearly enunciated language, the purpose of the founders of these libraries that they were more especially created for the benefit of those who have finished their common school education rather than for the pupils only of the public schools. If this means anything, it means the promotion of Adult Education.

And finally we have foreshadowed the idea to which the latest form of legislation is tending — compulsory library laws as a natural concomitant of compulsory education.

Returning to the time before the law of 1835 had begun to meet with general acceptance, we find in an article by Robert B. Patton of New York City, in the "American Biblical Repository" for January, 1853, an enlightening view of the library field as it existed at that time. Speaking of the libraries of his city and comparing them with those of other cities he says: "The whole number of volumes contained in all the public libraries of the United States, form . . . about half the number contained in the libraries of Paris, viz., 1,333,000, and the city of Lyons alone can boast of nearly as many volumes in its public libraries, as would be furnished by all the public libraries of the twenty-six United States. Again, the public libraries of the city of New York collectively, amount to 69,500 volumes. If these 69,500 volumes were brought together assorted and arranged, rejecting

duplicates, etc., in order to form one library, it would numerically not much exceed the single library of Harvard University. Again, it appears that all the public libraries of the city of New York will furnish about one-ninth part of the number of libraries in the city of Lyons; with which, in point of population and devotion to manufactures and commerce, a comparison may be instructively made; and not one-half as many volumes as are contained in the public libraries of Marseilles, an enterprising commercial city, with a population one-half as great as that of New York." Notwithstanding the unfavorable light in which the libraries of New York City were placed by this comparison, the writer had faith that the energy of our people, would, in time, remove this stigma. Could he have lived to the present day (1926) and seen thirty libraries in this state with 50,000 volumes or more, each, and twenty-eight others with 100,000 volumes or more, he would have realized most fully the justness of the estimate he placed upon the American character when he penned the following words: — "It must, therefore, be acknowledged that another distinguishing trait of American character is the unrivalled promptness and rapidity with which even the largest plans are carried forward to their accomplishment. The interval between the conception and the execution, usually filled up with doubts, and fears, trials and failures, hopes and anxieties, is here almost annihilated by the absorbing energy with which we press forward to the consummation."

But the twelve years which intervened before 1850 were to work a great change in the library field in this state. The close of the first half of the century saw here, including academic and school district libraries, a total of 8,080 libraries, with an aggregate collection of 1,756,254 volumes, or nearly one-half out of a total in this country of 9,505 libraries containing in all 3,753,964 volumes.

During the second quarter of a century from 1825–1849 there were established in the state fifty-six new libraries. Seventeen of these now have 10,000 volumes or more, of which four contain more than 40,000 volumes. They are the New York Law Institute Library, 1828; Buffalo Library, 1836; Union Theological Seminary Library, 1836; Astor Library, 1849; New York Academy of Medicine, 1847.

LIBRARIES FOUNDED FROM 1850 – 1874

We are now approaching a period in which there was a more general awakening of library interest and during which the principle of taxation for the support of free public libraries was to be carried a step further than under

the law creating school district libraries. It had been found that the promoters of these libraries had made their unit too small; and that a proper selection of books for, and supervision of these libraries, were wanting. It was then, that the profound wisdom of Mr. Barnard's recommendation came to be recognized and the town instead of the school district was adopted as the unit. In consequence of this change, the public library movement entered upon a career which has continued to advance with ever-increasing strides from that day to this.

Time and space fail us to enter into the details of this period. We must be content to mention some of the factors which were potent in advancing the cause of free public libraries. In England were the two Parliamentary Committees, one on Public Libraries and the other to inquire into the Management of the British Museum, the reports of which are excellent reading even to-day. In this country we must not fail to mention the founding of the Astor Library and the work, then already under way by Mr. James Lenox, who had already begun the formation of that unparalleled collection which still bears his name, though now, like the Astor Library, forming a part of The New York Public Library. Mr. Charles C. Jewett, Librarian of the Smithsonian Institution was bending all his energies to the cause, and to him we are indebted for his valuable report entitled, "Notices of Public Libraries in the United States," his work on the "Construction of Library Catalogues," and the Library Conference of 1853, of which he was the leading spirit. It is not unlikely that his reputation will occupy a more prominent position in our library annals a century hence than it does to-day. If such is the case, it may well be predicted that it will be owing to his original scheme of forming at the Smithsonian Institution a great Central Bibliographical and Cataloguing Bureau. As our libraries become larger and the product of the printing press increases in overwhelming magnitude, the necessity of some such institution will come more and more to be recognized.

But let us return for a few moments to the School District Libraries of the State and follow their subsequent career. It was during the early part of this period that the School District Libraries of New York reached high watermark. In 1853 they numbered on their shelves the enormous aggregate of 1,604,210 volumes. Their influence upon the public can never be fully measured. That they stimulated the formation of many public and private

libraries cannot well be questioned. How otherwise can we account for the fact that during the decade from 1850-59 more public libraries were founded than for the entire quarter of a century preceding? The salutary influence of these libraries is shown by a statement made in the Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, for 1889. He says: — "It is the common and grateful testimony of our native adult population that the district library was of priceless advantage to them and that it exerted an enlightening, broadening, and elevating influence upon society unequalled by any other educational enterprise ever undertaken here."

But evil days were in store for the school district libraries. Pernicious legislation, which had permitted the diversion of library money to other purposes, interfered with their healthful development. Unfortunately for the state, which had been the pioneer in establishing the principle of public libraries supported by public taxation and had fostered them with state aid, the very fact that these libraries had been for a time so successful stood in the way of a change to the free town library system which was now beginning to be acted upon in other states. And here it may not be amiss to state some of the reasons why this, the school district library movement, begun under such favorable circumstances and quite in advance of the times, came to fall into neglect and decay. As already intimated, the option given the school districts to divert library moneys to the payment of teachers' salaries, after a library of a certain size had been formed in each district, was the cause of their downfall. Nor was this all. The state was growing rapidly. The number of school districts had increased from 9,865 in 1834, to 11,587 in 1852. As a result the amount received for library purposes became too small for each pupil so that it was utterly impossible to keep the libraries up to their point of usefulness or even to replace worn-out books. New books are as important for the healthful support of a reading public as is fresh air for our lungs. The lack in either case causes asphyxiation, and results in death no less to one than to the other.

Viewed in the light of more recent experience, we find that the principal elements of weakness in the system were: —

1. The district was too small a unit.
2. There was lack of restraint and direction in the selection of books.
3. There was no suitable provision made for their shelving, supervision, and care.
4. The amount received became so small as to be wholly inadequate for their healthful growth.

5. Pernicious legislation helped to break down rather than build up, by permitting funds to be diverted to other purposes.

6. There was no increase of the state appropriation to meet the growth and increasing needs of the libraries.

The libraries continued to decrease in numbers until 1884, notwithstanding the \$50,000 annually appropriated by the state for their support. In that year they numbered but 701,437 volumes. In 1893 a law was passed correcting the evils which had previously existed and from that time onward they have increased in size. In 1896 they had increased to 998,896 volumes or nearly 300,000 volumes in twelve years.

During the period from 1850–1874 one hundred and eighty-nine libraries were founded. Of these, seven now contain more than 40,000 volumes each, and twenty-six have from 10,000 to 40,000 volumes each. Among the most important of the larger ones may be named the: Y. M. C. A. Library of New York, 1852; Brooklyn Library, 1857; The Grosvenor Library, Buffalo, 1859; Long Island Historical Library, 1863; Cornell University Library, 1868; The Lenox Library, 1870; Syracuse University Library, 1872.

The third great library revival took place in 1876. The history of this is of too recent a date and too well known to be repeated here. Many factors which, as we have seen, had been quietly at work for years previous, were brought into prominence by the general activity of the centennial year.

THE LIBRARIES OF NEW YORK STATE TO-DAY

From what precedes we learn that New York, as a state, was very early an important factor in the library development of this country. It may not be out of place to consider here the resources of her libraries at the present time. By so doing we shall realize their phenomenal growth.

The statistics that follow show the increase since the beginning of the present century. They are based on the *Handbooks* of the New York Library Club (1902 and 1922) and Patterson's *American Educational Directory* for 1926 (vol. 23).

The present writer, as Chairman of a Committee appointed about 1900 to prepare a Handbook for the New York Library Club, compiled a list of the

Libraries in Greater New York. This list was published as part of the Club's Handbook in 1902, and was prepared to serve as a record of the history, regulations, and resources of all the libraries existing at that date.

The Handbook of the Club issued in 1922, twenty years later, followed the general plan of its predecessor. The two have been used as a basis for a comparison between these libraries in 1902 and in 1922.

Patterson's *Educational Directory* has been used for statistics of libraries of 50,000 volumes or more outside of New York City.

From these combined sources we ascertain that there are 56 libraries in the state of 50,000 volumes or more each, containing in the aggregate 11,805,425 volumes. In 1922 there were in New York City 212 libraries of less than 50,000 volumes each, containing in all, 1,753,412 volumes. This brings the total number of volumes in the state up to 13,558,837. It should be borne in mind, however, that these figures take no account of libraries outside of New York City not included in the list that follows. Even so, there are enough books recorded here to fill more than 250 miles of shelving, allowing ten volumes to the foot.

The Handbook of 1902 credits the libraries of Greater New York with possessing 4,575,196 volumes; that of 1922 increases the number to 9,477,753. This brings to light the astonishing fact that these libraries have not only doubled the number of their volumes in the twenty years between 1902 and 1922, but have added 327,361 volumes more than enough for that purpose.

Astounding as this statement is, it falls far short of telling the whole story. No account is here taken of pamphlets (volumes in embryo) of which every library possesses more or less — nine, alone, of the libraries mentioned above reporting 376,000. Nor should we ignore many large collections of other valuable matter, such as broadsides, prints and engravings, maps, music, photographs, indexed collections of clippings, etc., etc.

The mass of information contained in the New York Library Club's Handbooks is enhanced by an exhaustive, alphabetical index of many special collections. This feature is of the greatest value to local scholars and should be more generally known than we fear it is.

The following list* contains the names and number of volumes in all the libraries of the state that contain over 50,000 each:

PLACE	NAME OF LIBRARY	NUMBER OF VOLUMES
Albany - - - -	New York State Library - - - - -	622,000
Albany - - - -	Public Library - - - - -	78,000
Aurora - - - -	Wells College, Cleveland Library - - - - -	53,431
Binghamton - - - -	Public Library - - - - -	58,298
Buffalo - - - -	Grosvenor Library - - - - -	192,000
Buffalo - - - -	Public Library - - - - -	485,871
Clinton - - - -	Hamilton College - - - - -	112,000
Geneva - - - -	Hobart College - - - - -	80,000
Hamilton - - - -	Colgate University - - - - -	110,000
Ithaca - - - -	Cornell University - - - - -	750,000
Mount Vernon - - - -	Public Library - - - - -	62,093
New Rochelle - - - -	Public Library - - - - -	59,709
New York - - - -	American Geographical Society - - - - -	57,210
New York - - - -	American Museum of Natural History - - - - -	100,000
New York - - - -	Association of the Bar of the City of New York - - - - -	131,964
New York - - - -	Brooklyn Public Library - - - - -	956,051
New York - - - -	College of St. Francis Xavier (Patterson) - - - - -	80,000
New York - - - -	College of the City of New York - - - - -	70,000
New York - - - -	Columbia University - - - - -	900,000
New York - - - -	Columbia University, Law Library - - - - -	91,000
New York - - - -	Columbia University, Teachers' College - - - - -	72,000
New York - - - -	Cooper Union - - - - -	50,745
New York - - - -	Engineering Societies - - - - -	150,000
New York - - - -	Fordham University - - - - -	100,000
New York - - - -	General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen - - - - -	92,000
New York - - - -	General Theological Seminary - - - - -	65,000
New York - - - -	Hispanic Society of America - - - - -	100,000
New York - - - -	Jewish Theological Seminary - - - - -	65,000
New York - - - -	Long Island Historical Society (Brooklyn) - - - - -	90,000
New York - - - -	Medical Society of the County of Kings - - - - -	76,000
New York - - - -	Mercantile Library Association - - - - -	200,000
New York - - - -	New York Academy of Medicine - - - - -	120,000
New York - - - -	New York Board of Education (libraries) - - - - -	524,640
New York - - - -	New York Historical Society - - - - -	137,000
New York - - - -	New York Law Institute - - - - -	92,048
New York - - - -	The New York Public Library (libraries) - - - - -	2,630,129
New York - - - -	New York Society Library - - - - -	120,000
New York - - - -	New York University - - - - -	89,554
New York - - - -	Pratt Institute Free Library (Brooklyn) - - - - -	125,000
<i>Brought forward - - - - -</i>		<u>9,948,743</u>

* It should be remembered that many of these figures are for the year 1922. — Editor, Bulletin.

PLACE	NAME OF LIBRARY	NUMBER OF VOLUMES
	<i>Carried forward</i> - - - - -	9,948,743
New York - - -	Queens Borough Public Library (Jamaica) - - -	300,000
New York - - -	Union Theological Seminary - - -	150,000
Niagara Falls - - -	Public Library - - -	55,000
Poughkeepsie - - -	Adriance Memorial Library - - -	64,553
Poughkeepsie - - -	Vassar College, Thompson Memorial Library - - -	140,918
Rochester - - -	Public Library - - -	158,087
Rochester - - -	Reynolds Library - - -	90,565
Rochester - - -	Rochester Theological Seminary - - -	51,834
Rochester - - -	Rochester University - - -	120,000
Schenectady - - -	Free Public Library - - -	66,037
Schenectady - - -	Union College - - -	62,200
Syracuse - - -	Public Library - - -	173,534
Syracuse - - -	Syracuse University - - -	120,438
Troy - - -	Public Library - - -	57,099
Utica - - -	Public Library - - -	110,296
West Point - - -	West Point Military Academy - - -	61,406
Yonkers - - -	Public Library - - -	74,715
Total - - - - -		11,805,425
New York - - - - -		7,735,341
Other Cities - - - - -		4,070,084
Total - - - - -		11,805,425

LIBRARIES OF GREATER NEW YORK

SIZE	1902		1922		GAIN OR LOSS
	NUMBER OF LIBRARIES	NUMBER OF VOLUMES	NUMBER OF LIBRARIES	NUMBER OF VOLUMES	
1 - 5M Vols. -	169	304,618	104	192,959	- 111,659
5M- 10M Vols. -	45	288,535	51	308,345	+ 19,810
10M- 20M Vols. -	20	261,523	33	444,007	+ 182,484
20M- 30M Vols. -	7	168,397	11	333,464	+ 165,067
30M- 40M Vols. -	4	165,670	8	260,600	+ 94,930
40M- 50M Vols. -	3	125,000	5	214,037	+ 89,037
50M-100M Vols. -	11	746,275	13	979,557	+ 233,282
100M Vols. and more -	9	2,515,178	16	6,744,753	+ 4,229,606
Total - - -	268	4,575,196	241	9,477,753	+ 4,902,557

Date Due

JAN 28 1966

JAN 14 1966

APR 5 1967

APR 6 RECD

JAN 11 1968

JAN 7 REC'D

NOV 13 1969

NOV 1 0 RECD

UNIVERSITY OF B.C. LIBRARY



3 9424 02423 8112



